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No. 6

RECOMMENDED  
FOR MATURE  
READERS

# ALIEN WORLDS

STM



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Steve Oliff



# STRATOSPHERIC SCRIBBLINGS

c/o PACIFIC COMICS / 8423 Production Ave. / San Diego, CA 92121

Dear Bruce

I'm more than delighted to have Pacific Comics on the newsstand. It's wonderful to have creativity and vitality back in the field. The old anticipation of our younger comic buying days comes back and I look forward to your new ideas and titles.

*Rocketeer* (terrific), *Sherlock Holmes*, *Twisted Tales* and *Alien Worlds* are particularly good and many of your other titles show a lot of promise. I'm a little concerned with a tendency towards gratuitous "sex and violence" in some instances, but hope your steady hand as Editor can keep a balanced perspective.

This letter is occasioned by the Al Williamson piece in *Alien Worlds* #4, "Land of the Fire." Unless my memory is leading me astray, I've seen it before. I'm sure it was in either of *Witzend* or the old *Buster Crabbe* comics (circa 1952-3-4?)—I'd take a stab at issue #5—in any event, am I right or wrong? I think the last two panels are new, with a little reworking of the third last. New story, old art, I'd guess.

Anyways, I'd appreciate clarification. Good issue good comics, you're all doing a splendid job.

Kindest Regards,  
David Medhurst  
5 Vicora Linkway  
Suite 1807  
Don Mills, Ontario  
M3C 1A4

"Land of the Fire" was first published in Wally Wood's "Wizend" magazine in the late 1950's as "Savage World" with a script by Wood and lettering by Arlene Williamson. It was originally intended for an issue of "Buster Crabbe Comics" in the early 1950's. "Savage World" was again printed in the mid-1970's by the Marvel Group. "Land of the Fire" marks the first appearance of the job in color. None of the artwork was ever reworked in any edition—only the script. —ed

Dear Bruce,

Hoo boy, the "Inheritors" was sheer brilliance. Both story and art were just perfect. You've written some good stories since starting *Alien* and *Twisted* but this is faraway the best. Very intelligent, slowly paced and it seemed so, uh, laid back(?) I don't know if you meant it but the story seemed to have a subtle anti-nuclear tone. It bugs me that important issues like that are completely ignored by comic book writers, except the occasional post-holocaust life stories (contradiction in terms—

no?) Now that certain parties have gained their much sought after creative freedom they are turning out dreadful stories, and only you and Doug Moench are consistently producing good stories, my thanks.

Scott Hampton's art was also a joy to behold, the figures, the landscapes, the scenery and the colour were so far removed from regular four-colour comics that it was incredible.

Alas, not all of the issue was this good. "Pi in the Sky" had the usual great art and colouring of Ken Steacy but the story, knowingly over-written, took up too much space—the word balloons blocked out too much of the art. Apart from that the story was decidedly bland, like nothing there.

The last story, the Roy Krenkel tribute, was rather nice. Yeates' nostalgic art was very pleasing as was Jones' story. Not quite as grand as the lead story but very satisfying nonetheless.

I know that you are against continued stories, but how about devoting a whole issue to one story—or the story in two issues—so we can have more characterization, plot development, and grander ideas. Surely, at the moment your present situation limits your horizons and most stories have to end with a comic equivalent of a punch-line. Despite the good stories—having to write 3 or 4 a month leads to some pretty vacant stories e.g. "Pi in the Sky." So, how about it? Well, that's about it for now. Keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely,  
Nick Goodes  
11 Vicars Oak Road  
Uppernwood  
London, England

Dear Bruce,

I am not a writer, so I will not comment on the stories in *Alien Worlds*. I am not an artist, so I will not comment on the artwork in *Alien Worlds*. But I am a reader, and I would like to say *Alien Worlds* is good reading.

And, if I may make a suggestion, I would like to see pictures of the various artists on the inside cover of *Alien Worlds* and *Twisted Tales*. It is aggravating seeing the name of Ploog or Stevens in many publications and not know what they look like.

By the way, I'm all for a fantasy anthology book.

Keith Drawbaugh  
4093 Old Orchard Road  
York, PA 17402

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# PLANET PERFICT

THE SILVERY, BULLET-SHAPED SPACE CRUISER SKIMMED SMARTLY ACROSS THE INKY VOID, CLOSING RAPIDLY ON THE SHIMMERING BLUE-GREEN SPHERE BELOW. INSIDE THE SHIP'S ALLOY HULL, PROFESSOR ROBERT GREYMAN AND BIO-GENETICS STUDENT BERT ANDERSON STOOD BEFORE THE CIRCULAR VIEWPORT AND GAZED EXCITEDLY AT THE MAN-MADE WORLD SWIMMING UP TO THEM.

THERE SHE IS, ANDERSON! YA-HOO! JUST LOOK AT HER! PERFECT! SHE'S PERFECT! AN EXACT DUPLICATE OF EARTH— WITH A FEW NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS, THAT IS. I'VE DONE IT LAD! I'VE SUCCEEDED! AND THEY LAUGHED AT ME AT CAL TECH!



TAKE IT EASY, PROFESSOR... WE HAVEN'T LANDED YET. IT MAY ONLY LOOK PERFECT FROM UP HERE.

NONSENSE! I'VE SUCCEEDED. CAN'T YOU FEEL IT? TWENTY YEARS IT TOOK TO GROW FROM THE TIME WE PLANTED THE FIRST SEEDS IN '62. NOW LOOK AT HER! LOOK AT HER! HA HA! I DID IT!

BETTER STRAP IN FOR LANDING, PROFESSOR...



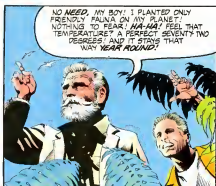
BY GEORGE, I'VE MADE BIOLOGICAL HISTORY, ANDERSON! THIS IS MY FINEST MOMENT AND I INTEND TO ENJOY IT TO THE FULLEST! HA HA! LOOK AT THE TREES! PERFECT!





AH-HH! SMELL THAT AIR, ANDERSON! 100% PURE! THAT'S WHAT NON-POLLUTED PHOTO-SYNTHESIS WILL GIVE YOU. LOOK AT THAT FLORA--EVERY LEAF A MASTERPIECE! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE ANIMAL LIFE!

AREN'T YOU TAKING A SIDEARM, PROFESSOR?



NO NEED, MY BOY! I PLANTED ONLY FRIENDLY PALMA ON MY PLANET! NOTHING TO FEAR! HA-HA! FEEL THAT TEMPERATURE? A PERFECT SEVENTY-TWO DEGREES! AND IT STAYS THAT WAY YEAR ROUND!



LOOK HERE, SON! A LEPUS JUCARUNDI! ONLY THE MOST DELICATE, THE MOST AROMATIC FLOWERS FOR MY PLANET! IT'S A PARADISE, ANDERSON, A VIRTUAL PARADISE!

YEAH, SWELL... ONLY I SORTA MISS THE **BARS** ON ALPHA 5...



BAH! ALPHA 5 INDEED! **FILTHY** PLACE! NOTHING BUT EXHAUST FUMES, FACTORY SMOKE, CROWDED STREETS, AND...

**-FLIES! OH GOD NO! FLIES! ANDERSON, FLIES!**

YEAH? SO?



I DIDN'T **PLANT** THEM! I DIDN'T **WANT** THEM! I **HATE** FLIES! I CREATED THIS PLANET TO GET **AWAY** FROM FLIES! IT'S **RUINED!** IT'S ALL **RUINED!**

SO WHAT'S A FEW FLIES? SEEMS KINDA... **NATURAL** TO ME, Y' KNOW?

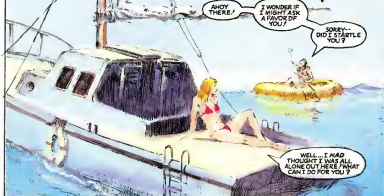


THEY MUST HAVE BEEN IN THE **SHIP** DURING THAT FIRST SEEDING... I MUST HAVE BROUGHT THEM **WITH** ME BY ACCIDENT FROM EARTH...

LOOK ON THE **BRIGHT** SIDE, PROFESSOR! AT LEAST THEY HAVEN'T **TAKEN** OVER! SOMETHING MUST BE EATING THEM, WHICH MEANS YOUR PLANET IS **EVOLVING** JUST LIKE YOU WANTED IT TO! YOU'RE STILL A **SUCCESS!**

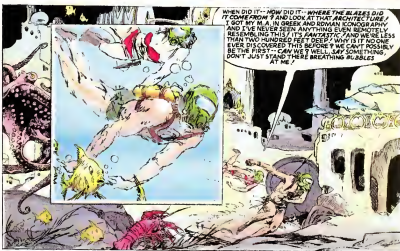


# THE TEST



STORY: BRUCE JONES ART: ROY G. KRENKEL FRAMING SEQUENCE: VAL MAYERIK

Colors: Joe Chiodo Letters: Cody



OKAY, NOW'S  
THIS: IT RISES  
OUT OF THE  
MURKY PAST  
ONCE EVERY  
CENTURY LIKE  
BIGADOOO.

GREAT, RICK,  
YOU CAN GO  
BACK TO YOUR  
RUBBER  
RAFT NOW.

WELL, YOU GOT A BETTER THEORY?  
I'LL GO YOU ONE BETTER: LOOK AT  
THE FACADES OF THOSE BUILDINGS--  
IN ONLY A FEW YEARS THEY'D  
NORMALLY BE COVERED WITH  
LICHEN AND BARNACLES--

YOU'RE  
RIGHT--

SMOOTH AS  
GLASS AND AS NEW  
AS IF THEY WERE  
BUILT LAST WEEK!  
THIS IS AMAZING,  
RICK. THIS IS  
TERRIFIC!  
THIS IS --

BEAUTIFUL? PURE?  
UNTOUCHED? PURE?  
MAYBE WE OUGHT TO  
GET OUR LITTLE  
PUPPETS OUT OF HERE  
BEFORE SOMEONE  
UPSTAIRS SPOTS YOUR  
BOAT AND DECIDES TO  
PUT A MCDONALD'S  
DOWN HERE...

I GUESS  
THIS MEANS  
"NO"...

LEAVE? ARE  
YOU NUTS? I  
DON'T KNOW ABOUT  
YOU, BUSTER, BUT  
IT'S NOT EVERY DAY  
I GET TO PLAY  
COLUMBUS!

AMANDA'S ANSWER COMES IN A GIDDY BURST OF BUBBLES  
AS SHE KICKS EXCITEDLY TOWARD ONE OF THE MAIN  
ARCHWAYS OF THE LAST CYCLOPEAN LABYRINTH, URGING  
HER NEW-FOUND FRIEND DAWNARD WITH INSISTENT WAVES  
OF HER ARM.



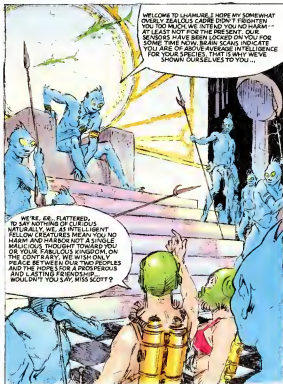
WAIT A MINUTE, I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING, THE RUSSIANS! WHAT IF THIS IS SOME NEW KIND OF COMMUNIST MISSILE SILEO OR SOMETHING? MAYBE THEY'VE COME UP WITH SOME MALICIOUS NEW SUPER-WEAPON AND THEY'RE USING THE OCEAN FLOOR AS A BASE! MAYBE THESE PORTALS ARE LAUNCHING SITES!

A LITTLE BAROQUE FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONRY WOULDN'T YOU SAY? ARE YOU ALWAYS THIS SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THE UNKNOWN, MISS SCOTT? YOU LOOK LIKE SUCH AN INTELLIGENT, TRUSTING INDIVIDUAL. I THOUGHT FROM THE WAY YOU ALLOWED ME TO COME ABOARD YOUR CRAFT...

INTELLIGENT, YES, TRUSTING--? WHO DO YOU THINK YOU CAN REALLY TRUST THESE DAYS, RICK? LOOK, I DON'T ENJOY BEING SKEPTICAL--I DIDN'T INVENT ATOMIC WARFARE--BUT IT'S HERE AND THE NEURDISIS GOES WITH IT!

AMANDA! DON'T FIGHT THEM! YOU'LL TEAR LOOSE YOUR AIR-ROSE! JUST RELAX! LET THEM TAKE US! ONCE THEY GET CALMED DOWN, I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO TO REASON WITH THEM! DON'T WORRY--I'M HERE!







AS IMPRESSIVE AS YOUR POWER IS, IT PALES IN THE FACE OF OUR CAPACITY FOR DESTRUCTION. WE COULD EASILY VAPORIZE THE ENTIRE SURFACE IN A MATTER OF SECONDS--WE WILL DO SO IF NECESSARY. WHAT WE PROPOSE AS AN ALTERNATIVE IS A SIMPLE TEST OF FAITH. YOU TWO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN AS MINISTERS OF THAT TRUST. TWO TYPICAL, INTELLIGENT REPRESENTATIVES OF YOUR SPECIES. WE WILL RELEASE YOU, SET YOU FREE. YOU NEED ONLY REMAIN SILENT WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR PRESENCE FOR THREE DAYS. THAT IS ALL. IF NO MOVE HAS BEEN MADE AGAINST US IN THAT TIME, WE WILL CONSIDER YOUR RACE WORTHY OF FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS. IF NOT--THE WORLD AS YOU KNOW IT WILL END. THAT IS OUR PROPOSAL. WE THINK IT A FAIR ONE. WE DO NOT ASK YOU TO TRUST US, ONLY TO BE YOURSELVES TRUST WORTHY. WHAT SAY YOU ? MIS S SCOTT ?



WELL, I--YES, I SUPPOSE THAT'S O.K.--THAT IS, I MEAN, IT SOUNDS REASONABLE. I WOULDN'T, UN, YOU SAY SO, LHM, RICK ?

I'D SAY IT SOUNDS MORE THAN FAIR, AND I FOR ONE CAN PROMISE YOU THAT IT'S A TRUST THAT WON'T BE BROKEN. THIS COULD BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD UNITING NOT ONLY YOUR PEOPLE AND MINE, BUT ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH. THIS IS LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE.



"A DREAM I PRESUME YOU SURFACE-DWELLERS WILL NOT ALLOW TO BE TURNED INTO A NIGHTMARE. FOR, MARK MY WORD, OUR REPLY TO ANY DECEIT WILL BE AS SWIFT AS IT IS TERRIBLE... DESTRUCTION ON A SCALE OF WHICH YOUR RACE HAS SCARCELY DREAMED. OUR INVISIBILITY DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS IS PROOF OF OUR TECHNICAL SUPERIORITY. WHILE IT IS TRUE OUR HOME IS IN THE SEA, WE ARE NOT INCAPABLE OF TRAVELING QUITE CONSPICUOUSLY ON LAND... AND MAKING IT OUR OWN..."

EVEN AS WE SPEAK, INVISIBLE SQUADRONS OF MY PEOPLE ARE DEPLOYING MEGA-WEAPONS IN EVERY CORNER OF EVERY OCEAN IN THE WORLD. AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE THEY CAN BE RELEASED IN ONE GREAT WAVE OF CHAOS THAT WILL LITERALLY WASH YOUR SPECIES FROM THE PLANET. UNLIKE YOUR PUNY THERMONUCLEAR WEAPONS, OURS VAPORIZE IMMEDIATELY ONLY THOSE TARGETS INTENDED, LEAVING ALL OTHER LIFE FORMS, ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE, VIRTUALLY UNHARMED. NATURALLY, ALL RECORDS OF YOUR HISTORY, ART AND SCIENCES WILL REMAIN INTACT AS WELL, THAT WE MIGHT MAKE A THOROUGH STUDY OF CREATURES WHO CAN REACH SOBLY SUBLIMELY SOPHISTICATED LEVELS IN SOME AREAS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY ENGAGING IN THE NEANCERTAL ACTIVITIES OF WAR...

I HOPE THE TWO OF YOU REALIZE THE EXTENT OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS TEST OF FAITH; YOU WILL BE ACTING AS SPOKESMEN FOR AN ENTIRE WORLD... YOUR DECISION WILL AFFECT THE FUTURE OF VIRTUALLY EVERY LIVING HUMAN ABOVE US... A HEAVY BURDEN TO BE PLACED UPON EVEN THE BROADEST OF SHOULDERS. WE THEREFORE OFFER YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHIFT THIS RESPONSIBILITY ELSEWHERE IF YOU SO DESIRE, ON THE CONDITION, OF COURSE THAT YOU REMAIN WITH US UNTIL THE NEW COUNCIL IS CHOSEN AND THE TEST COMPLETED...

YOU MAY GO, RETURN TO THE UPPER WORLD AND REMEMBER OUR AGREEMENT: YOU WILL TELL NO ONE OF OUR EXISTENCE FOR THREE FULL DAYS, AFTER WHICH ONE OF OUR PEOPLE WILL CONTACT YOU.

GO IN PEACE...

NO! WE WANT THE RESPONSIBILITY! DON'T WE RICK?

OF COURSE.

VERY WELL THEN

EXTRAORDINARY! WELL I GUESS WE CAN TELL OUR GRANDCHILDREN ABOUT THIS ONE. HUM? THANK HEAVENS THEY'RE A BENIGN SOCIETY! OTHERWISE WE WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE! JUST THINK OF ALL THOSE WEAPONS IN ALL THOSE OCEANS AIMED AT OUR CITIES! MAKES YOUR SKIN CR--  
AMANDA? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

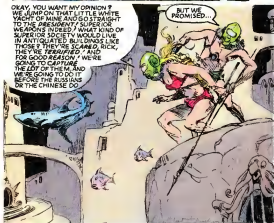


THE LAST UNDER-DWELLER WIVES FAREWELL...  
RICK AND  
AMANDA KICK  
UPWARD SWIFTLY,  
STOPPING PART-  
WAY TO AVOID  
THE "BENDS"...



OKAY, YOU WANT MY OPINION? WE JUMP ON THAT LITTLE WHITE YACHT OF MINE AND GO STRAIGHT TO THE PRESIDENT! SUPERIOR WEAPONS INDEED! WHAT KIND OF SUPERIOR SOCIETY WOULD LIVE IN ANTIQUATED BUILDINGS LIKE THOSE? THEY'RE SCARED, RICK, THEY'RE TERRIFIED, AND FOR GOOD REASON! WE'RE GOING TO CAPTURE THE LOT OF THEM, AND WE'RE GOING TO DO IT BEFORE THE RUSSIANS OR THE CHINESE DO.

BUT WE PROMISED...



DOESN'T THE FUTURE OF OUR WORLD MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU? JUST BECAUSE THEY TRUSTED US, DOES THAT MEAN WE SHOULD TRUST THEM? I SAY LET'S STRIKE WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME!



OF COURSE! THAT'S HOW THE STRONG SURVIVE! THAT'S HOW AMERICA BECAME THE PLACE IT IS TODAY! THAT'S WHY WE'LL ALWAYS WIN!



WE'VE GOT TO ALERT THE AUTHORITIES NOW, BEFORE THE RUSSIANS DISCOVER THE CITY!



..I'M AFRAID I CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT...



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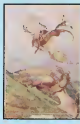


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# PRIDE OF THE FLEET

THE COLIFAX SHE WORE AT HER SHOULDER, AND SHE PRAYED LIKE IT. IT PULLED THE WINDING WAY. IT HURST IT LOOKED UGLY, THE STUNNER SHE HAD THROWN AWAY HOURS ALSO. SHE COULD CLAIM, LATER THAT SHE'D LOST IT IN THE UNDERBRUSH. IT WOULD COST HER, OF COURSE, BUT SHE'D RATHER PAY A FINE THAN BE HUMILIATED BY THE PRESENCE OF A STUNNER.

SHE WOULD HAVE THROWN AWAY THE COLIFAX, TOO, BUT IT HAPPENED TO BE WORTH SEVERAL MILLION DOLLARS. BASE VALUE AND MUCH MORE THAN THAT TO THE PRESTIGE OF GOLDEN SIX AND ITS COMMANDER. IF SHE HAD ANY INTENTION OF STAYING WITH THE FLEET, SHE HAD TO HANG ON TO THAT PARTICULAR PIECE OF EQUIPMENT.



ALL RIGHT, SHE'D PUT UP WITH IT, EVEN IF IT DID GET IN HER WAY, SLOW HER DOWN, AND (MOST IMPORTANTLY) UNPROBABLY DISGUISE HER NEWLY DESIGNED COMBAT UNIFORM. SHE'D PUT UP WITH IT...

BUT PRAYING IF SHE'D USE IT, SHE'D PUT THROUGH THE MISSION IN RECORD TIME AND BRING BACK HER MAN WITHOUT A SCRATCH—TO EITHER OF THEM, AND SHE'D PUT UP WITH ANY NEW TECHNOLOGICAL WONDERS TO ACCOMPLISH IT. DANGER? THREATS? SURE, THERE WERE ALWAYS THOSE...



STORY: BRUCE JONES PENCILS: FRANK BRUNNER INKS: MIKE MIGNOLA

Colors: Joe Chiodo Letters: Carrie McCarthy

BUT SHE'D RUN INTO THEM BEFORE A MORE JUNGLES ON MORE PLANETS THAN SHE COULD REMEMBER. SHE COULD HANDLE THEM. SHE HAD HER SWORD. HER SWORD...

SHE TOUCHED IT NOW, LIGHTLY ON THE JEWELLED HILT AS SHE STOPPED OVER A MOSS-LADEN LOG, AND SHE COULDN'T SUPPRESS THE SMILE OF PRIDE TUGGING AT HER CHEEK. NOW HERE WAS A SWORD!

HER UNIFORM MAY HAVE BEEN MERELY SHOWY, TRUE; THE FLAMING HAIR, MOISTURE-GLOSS LIPS, DIAMOND-STUPEFIED BOOTS—ALL DECORATION, ALL FOR EFFECT, GRANTED EVEN THE SWEEP AND DESIGN OF THE BLADE ITSELF MAY HAVE BEEN ORIENTALLY HISTORIC—BUT THAT'S WHERE THE DRAMATICS ENDED.



ONCE THAT BROWN-GLOVED HAND WRAPPED AROUND THAT BROWN SKIRT AND THE BUNDLING SABRE-LENGTH SAND FROTH ITS SCABBARD ALL THE TENSEL, SURE? ALL THE GUTTER STOPPED, SHE WAS LIGHTNING. SHE WAS WHIRLWIND SHE WAS BLUR—EVERYWHERE HER OPPONENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN JUST ONE-TENTH OF A SECOND BEFORE HE GOT THERE...

SHE WAS SLASH AND CLEAVE, AND TERRIBLE WHINING, WIND-SCREAMING PEATH TILL HER ADVERSARIES GOT PEEZY JUST WATCHING AND PROBABLY NEVER FELT THE INCREDIBLE RABID INCISIONS, EVEN AFTER THE GROUND WAS SOAKING RED AROUND THEM AND THEIR KNEES WERE BUCKLING OF THEIR OWN ACCORD. OH, SHE WAS GOOD... SHE WAS THE BEST.

SHE KNEW IT, TOO, AND ENJOYED THE REPUTATION THAT WENT WITH IT. MEN WERE AT ONCE INTENSELY ENAMOURSED AND TERRIFIED OF HER, SHE SIMPLY COULD NOT BE BESTED WITH A SWORD—NOT AT COLOUR OR ANVIL—AND IN A PLACE WHERE THE MEN OUTNUMBERED THE WOMEN THOSE TO ONE WELL, IT MADE LIFE INTERESTING...









SIR, I BELIEVE MY PRESENT UNIFORM WILL AFFORD ME THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF COMFORT AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT. AND THEREFORE SERVE AS THE BEST POSSIBLE ASSET TO MY ABILITIES AND THE SUBSEQUENT CAPTURE OF THE FUGITIVE...

...BUT THEN SHE'D REHEARSED IT THIRTY OR FORTY TIMES BEFORE ENTERING HIS OFFICE. EVERY WOMAN AT COLONY SIX WAS JEALOUS OF HER ABILITY TO HANDLE THE COMMANDER. IF THEY ONLY REALIZED HOW SIMPLE IT WAS...HOW UNDER ALL THE BRASS AND BELUFFE WAS JUST LIKE ALL MEN...



BY HIS UNIFORM SHE COULD SEE HE WAS A MEMBER OF FLIST BUT NOT OF COLONY SIX, AND COLONY SIX HAD EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGES ON THIS PLANET. COULD THIS BE ANOTHER ANGL FROM ANOTHER COLONY? SHE STROOD POLITELY, CONFIDENTLY UP TO HIM, AND TOOK IN HIS BEARING WITH A SINGLE SWEEP OF HER CRITICAL EYES...



TALL, HUSKY, YELLOW FLIST STRIPS ON HIS ARM LIKE HERB, BUCCANER PANTS AND BOOTS (VERY VOGUE THESE DAYS) TANK TOP, SERIES SEVEN SWORD, NO STUNNER, UNNATURALLY CURLY HAIR, THAT LAST ITEM WAS EGOCENTRIC. ANY MAN WHO HAD HIS HAIR SET REGULARLY WAS OBVIOUSLY GLED ON HIMSELF...



THIS GUY WAS PROBABLY INTO AN EGOT, FLINN THING (ALSO VERY VOGUE THESE DAYS). IT COULD BE ALL SWASSER BUT THEN SHE WAS PLAYBOYANT TOO AND SHE WAS GOOD! IT WAS ALWAYS WISE TO BE PRUDENT EVEN IF YOU WERE THE BEST...



I'M SHEPHERD, COLONY SIX ON FLIST APPREHENSION ORDERS DO YOU WISH TO ASSIST?



NO

SHE DIDN'T LIKE THE WAY HE SAID IT; SNOBBISH, SHE DIDN'T LIKE WHAT HIS MOUTH DID WHEN IT FORMED THE WORDS. BUT SHE WAS ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS, IN A HURRY, SHE'D GIVE HIM THE BENEFIT...



ARE YOU AWARE THAT THIS PLANET IS RESTRICTED TO COLONY SIX PERSONNEL?

IS THAT A FACT?

IT WAS THE WAY HE SAID IT AGAIN. OH, THIS WAS A REAL SMARTASS ALL RIGHT. THAT CONCEITED LITTLE PATRONISING SMILE. PROBABLY A SEXIST TO BOOT. SHE KNEW SHE SHOULD GO ABOUT HER BUSINESS, LEAVE THIS JERK TO HIMSELF, BUT SHE HELP ADDING ONE LAST ITEM...



WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS HERE?

I CAME TO BAG A HUNK, WITH MY SWORD!

WITH HIS SWORD, CUTS THE WAY HE ADDED THAT AT THE END TO LET HER KNOW HE DIDN'T NEED A STUNNER TO KILL A HUNK. OH, A REAL SMARTASS ALL RIGHT.



THAT'S AGAINST FLEET LAW.

YES.

AND YOU'RE GOING TO REPORT ME, RIGHT?

KLEVE!

IT WAS WHAT SHE EXPECTED. "KLEVE" WAS ONE OF THE UNIVERSAL WORDS FOR "ON GUARD," FOLLOWED BY THE SWIFT UNSHEATHING OF THE CHALLENGER'S SWORD. EITHER SHE FOLLOWED BUT NOW OR FLED IDIOTIC...

HIS SWORD, SHE NOTICED, MADE A SOUND LIKE "SHLUNK," NO SHARPENERS. HE MIGHT BE FLAMBOYANT BUT HE WASN'T IN HER LEAGUE. SHE STEPPED IN IMMEDIATELY, NOT WASTING TIME, WITH A DELIBERATELY SLOWED ENGLISH SHOULDER THRUST, SACRIFICING STYLE NOW TO SEE WHAT HE COULD DO...



HHAH!

HER WORD, ORIENTAL, LIKE HER SWORDSMANSHIP. NEITHER WAS WIDELY KNOWN AND RARELY PRACTICED, WHICH IS WHY SHE CHOSE THEM. HER SWORD SANG FROM ITS SCABBARD-SHINNERS!!—A PHENOMENON CAUSED BY THE FRICTION OF THE CUTTING EDGE RUNNING PAST TWO MINUTE WHEELLED SHARPENERS EMPLOYED WITHIN THE CASE...



HE PARRIED NICELY—ANY ONE COULD HAVE—BUT STILL HIS MOVEMENTS WERE RAPID, SURE, EVEN ADMIRABLE. SHE PIVOTED NEXT, WENT LOW AND TRIED A CYRNIAN VOLLPE TO THE SOLAR PLEXUS...



AGAIN HE BLOCKED WITH EASE, ADDING A QUICK COUNTER SLICE WHEN HE JERKED BACK THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO PUT HER OFF BALANCE. IT DIDN'T, OF COURSE, BUT HE WAS ABOVE AVERAGE, DEFINITELY...

SHE PLAYED WITH HIM FOR A WHILE, LETTING HIM GET IN A FEW FALSE SCORES UNTIL SHE KNEW HIS EVERY STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS. AND ALTHOUGH THE LATTER FAR OUTNUMBERED THE FORMER, SHE FOUND HIM A SPECTACULAR SWORDSMAN WITH THE POTENTIAL TO BE EVEN BETTER... IF HE DIDN'T SPEND ALL HIS TIME IN THE BEAUTY SALON. IT WOULD BE A PITY, SHE DECIDED TO WASTE SOMEONE WHO COULD BE SO VALUABLE TO FLEET...



SHE STEPPED BACK, CLOSED HER HEELS TOGETHER AND POINTED HER SWORD STIFFLY TO THE GROUND AT HER RIGHT SIDE. IT MEANT EITHER "I YIELD" OR "LET'S RECONSIDER."



YOU'RE A FINE SWORDSMAN. I DON'T WISH YOU HARM. LEAVE THE PLANET NOW AND I SEE NO REASON TO REPORT YOU...



THE VAIN SMILE. HE THOUGHT SHE WAS BLUFFING OUT OF FEAR. OH BOY. THERE WAS JUST NO HELP FOR THIS KID ALL RIGHT THEN. SHE'D TROD THE PLAN WAS OVER. SHE HAD TO GET BACK TO WORK...



HHAN.

NOW IT WAS HER TURN TO SMILE...

HER NEXT MOVE WAS SO LIGHTNING FAST HE HAD ONLY TIME TO FEEL THE BREEZE HER JOHN CARTER BLADE MADE IN PASSING IN FRONT OF HIM...



SHE SLOWLY, EVER SO CALMLY DREW THE SHORT BLADE TO AND HORIZONTAL WITH HER BREASTS. IT WAS A MASTERSTROKE. SHE SPOKED THEY WERE SPLENDID—BROAD, LARGE AND ROUND AND PINK-LIPPED. FIRM. FIRM MEN COULD WATCH THEM AND THE SWORD SIMULTANEOUSLY. HE WAS NO EXCEPTION...



HE STARTED TO COUNTER BUT SHE WAS FROZEN NOW AT THE COMPLETION OF HER THIRST SPARKING FIRED AT HIS CHEST, BUT SHE HAD MISSED. HE BLANCHED RYAN AT HIMSELF. HE'D FELT NOTHING.



THEN THE RIBBONS OF CRIMSON APPEARED MAGICALLY ACROSS HIS TANK TOP. DELAYED SECONDS BY THE IMPOSSIBLE KEENNESS OF HER BLADE HIS MOUTH FELL OPEN...



BEFORE HE COULD SHUT IT AGAIN SHE WAS BEHIND HIM, SEND-ING THE SLASHED TANK TOP SWISHING FROM HIS BODY AND OVER HIS HEAD WITH TAND PRECISELY PLACED THRUSTS. TOGETHER THEY WATCHED THE MATERIAL ARC HIGH INTO THE AIR AND DRAPE QUIETLY OVER A LEAFY BRANCH...

WHEN HE WHIRLED IN HUMILIATED RAGE AT HER, SHE WAS GONE, PROUSTING GRACEFULLY TO HIS RIGHT...



...NO TO HIS LEFT...



...NO, NO, SHE WAS BEHIND HIM AGAIN!—PULLING TENTATIVELY AT HIS WIDE SWASHBUCKLER'S BELT WITH SWORD POINT, THEN SPONTANEOUSLY SLICING THROUGH LIKE BUTTER TO THE ANKLES...



THE PANTS FELL AWAY LIKE PAPER DISCS

THEN SHE POINTED TO THE RIGHT—HE FOLLOWED—AND THE PANTS ABOUT HIS ANKLES BROUGHT HIM DOWN WITH A CRASH AS SHE'D PLANNED. HE HAD TO LET GO HIS SWORD TO PREVENT IMPALING HIMSELF...



SHE KICKED THE SWORD AWAY AND STUCK HER OWN BLADE BENEATH HIS TERRIFIED CHIN. HIS ADAM'S APPLE MOVED CONVULSIVELY AND HE WAS SUDDENLY SWIMMING IN PERSPIRATION...

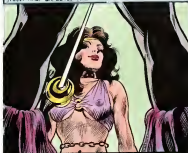


HE OBEYED IMMEDIATELY, PROPELLED AIRLESSLY BY THE SHINING TIP OF THE MAGIC SWORD.

SHE STOOD GRINNING GRIMLY AT HIS NAKEDNESS, LETTING THE RAZOR POINT TRACE A TICKLY NOT-QUIET-SKIN-PIERCING LINE DOWN HIS THROAT, CHEST, BELLY...



SHE LOWERED THE SWORD BETWEEN HIS LEGS AND COCKED HER HEAD SPECULATIVELY. SHE HAD CASTRATED ONLY ONE MAN BEFORE IN SWORDPLAY, ALTHOUGH IT WAS QUITE COMMONLY THE LOSER'S LOT AMONG FLEET SWORDSMEN; INDEED MANY HAD EXPECTED IT...



SHE LOOKED UP AT HIS DROPPING FACE: HE CAUGHT HER GLANCE AND SQUEEZED HIS EYES SHUT, CLENCHING HIS TEETH...

TURN AROUND, PIS, WHILE I DECIDE HOW TO KILL YOU...



BUT SHE FOUND LITTLE SATISFACTION IN NEEDLESSLY MANKING SOMEONE OR IN THE RAPIDLY GROWING PAD OF "GATHERING NUTS." IN HER BOOK, YOU EITHER KILLED YOUR OPPONENT OUTRIGHT OR YOU LET HIM GO THE WAY HE CAME...



HE TURNED DRINKABLY, LESS CALCULATED WITH FEAR, AND STOOD TREMBLING BEFORE THE SUN. HE WAS STANDING THERE STILL, AN HOUR LATER, LONG AFTER SHE HAD FADED SILENTLY AS A PANTHER INTO THE TRANSED JUNGLE...



ALONE IN THE FOREST AGAIN, SHE WAS STILL ON LEAKWOOD'S TRAIL AND STILL REMEMBERING WHAT THE COMMANDER SAID ABOUT HIM...



NOW THEN, SHEPHERD MY REPORTS SAY YOU KNEW THIS...AH...



LEAKWOOD, SIR.

KNEW HIM PERSONALLY IS THAT TRUE?



IT'S UNOFFICIALLY TRUE YES SIR "ACQUAINTED" IS PERHAPS A BETTER WORD WE RAN INTO EACH OTHER AT THE LIBRARY OCCASIONALLY AND HAD LUNCH TOGETHER ONCE OR TWICE.

ONCE OR TWICE

TWICE



WHAT KIND OF LUNCHES SHEPHERD

JUST LUNCH AT THE CAFETERIA.

I SEE WHAT SUB?

LET'S SEE... I BELIEVE HE TOOK ME TO THE MOVIES ONCE YES SEVERAL MONTHS AGO



AFTER THE FILM?

HE TOOK ME HOME--NO, I TOOK HIM HOME. HE'S SMALL SIR, AND WELL, I'M GOOD WITH A SWORD SO...

THE TRUTH IS, SIR, WE WERE JUST FRIENDS. THERE WAS NEVER ANYTHING ROMANTIC ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP. I DON'T THINK LEAKWOOD HAD ROMANTIC VIBRATIONS TOWARDS ANYONE. HE JUST WASN'T THE TYPE.



I SOCIALIZED WITH HIM BECAUSE I ENJOYED HIS COMPANY. I COULD RELAX AROUND HIM. HE LIKED ME FOR MY HAIR. IT WAS NICE TO KNOW YOU WERE GOING TO SPEND A QUIET EVENING WITHOUT GETTING PHYSICAL ONCE IN AWHILE. LEAKWOOD DIDN'T HAVE MANY FRIENDS. HE'S SORT OF... FUNNY LOOKING. TO BE BLUNT, I FELT A LITTLE BORRY FOR HIM, AND I KNEW HE LIKED MY PAYING ATTENTION TO HIM, ESPECIALLY AROUND THE COLONY SHORTHAND.



WAS HE A THIEF SHEPHERD? DID HE EVER STEAL ANYTHING TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE?

NOT THAT I'M AWARE OF, SIR.

TELL ME, HE HAD NO... SOMETHING EXTREMELY VALUABLE, EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE AND EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO COLONY SIR... I WANT IT BACK SHEPHERD...



UH... JUST WHAT WAS IT THAT LEAKWOOD STOLE I WANT TO KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR

I'M SORRY SHEPHERD, I CAN'T PROVIDE YOU WITH THAT INFORMATION.

...I CAN'T PROVIDE...

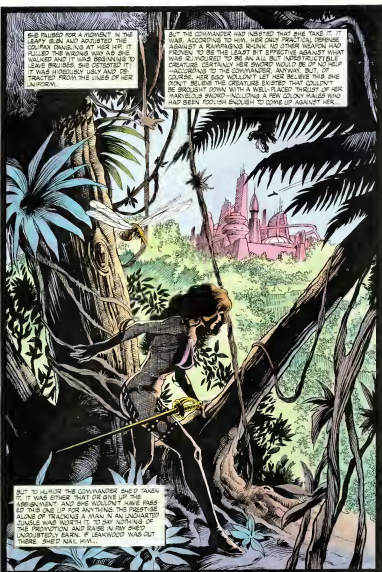


IT'S TOP SECRET, SHEPHERD. EVERYTHING IN THIS COLONY IS TOP SECRET. THE OBJECT THIS MAN STOLE IS HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL. I UNDERSTAND THERE ARE NO MORE THAT TWO OF THEM IN EXISTENCE AND BOTH OF THEM ARE HERE AT COLONY SIX-OR WERE HERE. I WANT IT BACK!

BUT SIR, IF I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT IT IS, HOW WILL I... I CAN...

I WANT IT BACK, SHEPHERD! THAT'S AN ORDER!!



A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark uniform with a sword at her waist, stands in a dense jungle. She is looking towards the right. In the background, a pink, futuristic city with spires and domes is visible through the trees. A large tree trunk is on the left, and a vine hangs from the right. A small insect with wings is flying near the tree trunk.

SHE PAUSED FOR A MOMENT IN THE LEAFY GLIM AND ADJUSTED THE COLPAX DANGLING AT HER HIP. IT PULLED THE WRONGS WAY AS SHE WALKED AND IT WAS BEGINNING TO LEAVE BRUISES. SHE DETESTED IT! IT WAS HORRIBLY UGLY AND DISTRACTED FROM THE LINES OF HER UNIFORM.

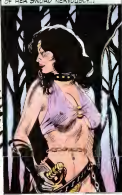
BUT THE COMMANDER HAD INSISTED THAT SHE TAKE IT. IT WAS, ACCORDING TO HIM, HER ONLY PRACTICAL DEFENSE AGAINST A RAMPAGING RHINO. NO OTHER WEAPON HAD PROVEN TO BE THE LEAST BIT EFFECTIVE AGAINST WHAT WAS RUMOURED TO BE AN ALL BUT INDestructIBLE CREATURE. CERTAINLY HER SWORD WOULD BE OF NO HELP—ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDER, ANYWAY. BUT, OF COURSE, HER SMO WOULDNT LET HER BELIEVE THIS. SHE DONT BELIEVE THE CREATURE EXISTED THAT COULDN'T BE BROUGHT DOWN WITH A WELL-PLACED THRUST OF HER MARVELOUS SWORD—including a few colony males who HAD BEEN FOOLISH ENOUGH TO COME UP AGAINST HER.

BUT TO HUMOR THE COMMANDER SHE'D TAKEN IT. IT WAS EITHER THAT OR GIVE UP THE ASSIGNMENT. AND SHE WOULDN'T HAVE PASSED THIS ONE UP FOR ANYTHING. THE PRESTIGE ALONE OF TRACKING A MAN IN AN UNCHARTED JUNGLE WAS WORTH IT. TO SAY NOTHING OF THE PROMOTION AND RAISE IN PAY SHE'D UNDOUBTEDLY EARN. IF LEAKWOOD WAS OUT THERE, SHE'D NAIL HIM...

THE DANGLEFLIES WERE OUT, ZEROING IN ON HER LIKE AN ATTACKING AIR FORCE, ROLLING THEIR CRYSTAL WINGS DELICIOUSLY IN HER SWEAT GLANDS...

SHE FOUND A MILKY BUSH WITHOUT EFFORT, BROKE ONE OF ITS BEARS BETWEEN HER FINGERS, AND SPREAD THE GUSTENING OIL OVER HER LIMBS. THE DANGLEFLIES BUZZED OFF RESENTFULLY.

THE GROUND BENEATH HER BOOTS GREW STEADILY SOFTER, DAMPER, AS IT ALWAYS DID TOWARD EVENING. THE RHUNKS WOULD BE PUSHING UP ANY TIME NOW. SHE FINGERED THE HILT OF HER SWORD NERVOUSLY.



A STRANGE SPECIES OF LIZARD-BIRD SCREECHED ABRUPTLY ABOVE HER HEAD. SHE TWISTED AROUND AND CAUGHT SIGHT OF ITS YELLOW-BLUE FEATHERS SPIRALING SWIFTLY ACROSS THE PALLID SKY, ARROWING GRACEFULLY TO A NEARBY TREE.



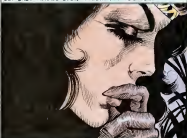
...LANDING NOT SO GRACEFULLY WITH A LIGHT PLOP, AS SHE WATCHED, IT BEGAN KICKING CONVULSIVELY. IT HAD CHOSEN THE WRONG TREE. IN A MOMENT IT STIFFENED AND FELL RAPIDLY INTO THE TRUNK AS THE TREE ABSORBED IT HUNGRILY...

SHE KNELT DOWN BESIDE LEAKWOOD'S LATEST BOOTPRINT AND TOOK A READING WITH THE POCKET TRACKMETER. SNAPPED TO HER GIRDLE. TO HER AMAZEMENT, THE LITTLE RED NEEDLE HOVERED JUST OVER THE SEVEN-MINUTE MARK...



LEAKWOOD MUST BE VERY CLOSE, ACCORDING TO HER RATE OF PURSUIT. HE MUST HAVE SLOWED CONSIDERABLY WITHIN THE LAST HOUR, OR HE COULDN'T HAVE TIED THIS EARLY. WAS IT AN AMBUSH? OR HAD HE FINALLY COME TO HIS SENSES?

SHE PRODUCED A FOOD TAB FROM HER BELT AND CHOMED IT REFLECTIVELY. LEAKWOOD WAS A HARD ONE TO FIGURE. ALL RIGHT, CAUTIOUS, INTROVERTIVE, RARELY TALKING. AT ALL. DURING THE FEW TIMES SHE'D BEEN WITH HIM, STILL SHE COULDN'T BELIEVE HE'D DO HER ANY HARM. HE MAY NOT HAVE SHARED THE OTHER MEN'S PASSION FOR HER, BUT SHE'D ALWAYS SEEN AFFECTION IN HIS EYES.



HE WORE AN ODD ONE, THOUGH...



SHE TWITCHED SPASMODICALLY AS A PUNGENT ODOR ASSAILED HER NOSTRILS. HER NOSE WRINKLED IN REVULSION. SHE CAST ABOUT FOR THE SOURCE, RIGHT HAND GRIPPING THE DARK HILT OF HER BLADE...

BEHIND HER, A SOFT PLOPPING NOISE BECAME EVIDENT. SHE WHIRLED IN TIME TO SEE THE BROWNISH SNOUT OF A FEMALE RHUNK POKING THROUGH THE SURFACE SOIL AND CLIMBS OF ITS OWN EXCREMENT...



SHE STEPPED BACK NERVOUSLY, EYES RIVETED ON THE ENORMOUS BUCK-LIKE HEAD, TWITCHING EARS AND BLINKING YELLOW PUPILS. THE SMELL BECAME OVERPOWERING NOW. IT HADN'T SEEN HER YET, SO SHE MERELY MERSED WITH THE SURROUNDING UNDERGROWTH.



SHE WATCHED IN REPUGNANT PASCINATION AS IT HEAVED ITS TITANIC BULK OUT OF THE WET EARTH AND YAWINED ENORMOUSLY. IT WAS EVERYTHING THE MANUAL AND THE COMMANDER HAD DESCRIBED...



NOW, I'M SURE YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THE WULFIRE ON THIS PLANET FROM YOUR MANUAL. SHEPHERD, LET ME SAY—AS ZE THAT THESE THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-EIGHT PAGES BEFORE YOU DO NOT EXAGGERATE IN DESCRIBING THE FEROCITY OF THESE CREATURES...







A COLIFAX. IT HUNG FROM THE GOLD CHAIN ON HER WAIST, THE GOLD METAL PRESSING UNCOMFORTABLY AGAINST HER BARE TUMMY, BANGING AGAINST IT WHEN SHE WALKED. UNTIL THIS MOMENT, IT HAD BEEN A HEAVY UNWANTED BURDEN THAT SHE'D HAVE GIVEN A WEEK'S PAY TO BE RID OF. TOP SECRET OR NOT...



IF IT COULD SOMEHOW PROTECT HER FROM THIS INCREDIBLE CREATURE BEFORE HER...FOR IT WAS OBVIOUS NOW THAT NOTHING ELSE COULD. THE COMMANDER HAD BEEN RIGHT SHE'D BEEN A FOOL TO THINK SHE COULD INFLICT THE BRIGHTEST DAMAGE ON ONE OF THESE MONSTROUSITIES WITH HER FLimsY SWORD. THE SWINGING RHUNK WAS AN AWK-INSPIRING STUNNIN' ARMOR-PLATED DESTRUCTION.

NOTHING SHORT OF A T-88H MISSILE COULD BRING IT DOWN, OF THAT SHE WAS SURE. THE SWORD IN HER HAND FELT, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HER LIFE, TOTALLY NEPHECTUAL. THAT SLY SHED DEPARTED FROM COUDLY THIEVES MUST HAVE BEEN AN IDOT; OR...

LIKE HER, HED NEVER SEEN A REAL RHUNK IN THE FLESH BEFORE...

SHE STUMBLERD BACK THROUGH THE CREEPERS AS IT LIFTED ITS HEAD AND GAZED ABOUT, PERHAPS SHE WERE VERY VERY QUIET.



ABRUPTLY THE GROUND DISAPPEARED SHE WAS TREADING EMPTV AIR...







THE HOTNESS FLOODING HER BODY WAS NOT Altogether UNpleasant. SHE HAD THE DISTINCT FEELING SHE WAS BEING PULLED SLOWLY APART FROM ALL SIDES LIKE HEATED TAPPI. SHE REFUSED TO PANIC THOUGH - SHE KNEW, AS COLONY COMMAND HAD TOLD HER, THE PROCESS WOULD REVERSE ITSELF. THE MOMENT SHE STEPPED ON THE YELLOW BUTTON...





ITS NOSTRILS DIDN'T FLARE ANY LESS. HOWEVER, AND THE TREMORS ALONG ITS BACK INCREASED. IF ANYTHING, IT WAS STILL INTENSELY INTERESTED IN HER FOR SOME REASON...

EVEN BEFORE IT MOVED OVER AND DELIBERATELY CRUSHED FLAT HER COLIFAX WITH ITS MASSIVE HOOF, SEALING HER FATE FOREVER, SHE KNEW...



...EVEN BEFORE IT WRAPPED ITS TEN TENTACLES ABOUT HER ARMPITS AND ADJUSTED HER TO A MOUNTING POSITION, SHE KNEW...

FOR SHE HAD LOOKED CLOSE INTO ITS EYES AND THEY HAD TOLD HER EVERYTHING. PERFECT AS THE COLIFAX WAS IT COULDN'T QUITE DISGUISE THE FAMILIAR PERSONALITY BEHIND THOSE EYES. THE QUIET, INTROVERTED BUT HIGHLY IMAGINATIVE BRAIN...

AND IN THAT INSTANT SHE KNEW EXACTLY WHY LEAKWOOD HAD LED HER THIS MERRY CHASE AND WHAT THE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT WAS HE'D STOLEN FROM COLONY 514... IF HE COULDN'T HAVE HER ONE WAY HE'D HAVE HER ANOTHER.

SHE'D MISS HER FRIENDS OF COURSE AND LIVE AT THE COLONY. BUT MOST OF ALL, SHE'D MISS HER SWORD. EVEN WITH THE HIGHLY SENSITIVE TENTACLES AT HER COMMAND, WITH SEVEN THOUSAND POUNDS OF BLUNK BEHIND IT, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO BE AS BRACEFUL AS DEKAR THOR'S.





**SUN RUNNERS 2.  
COMING IN JANUARY.**



**BY PAT BRODERICK  
AND ROGER MCKENZIE.**

**DAVID SCROGGY, EDITOR.**

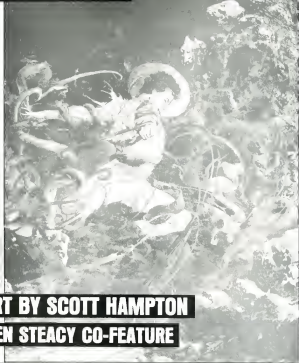
**PACIFIC. TOMORROW IS HERE.**



# **SILVERHEELS #2 COMING IN JANUARY**

**A HERO FOR  
THE NEW ERA**

**APRIL CAMPBELL  
BRUCE JONES**



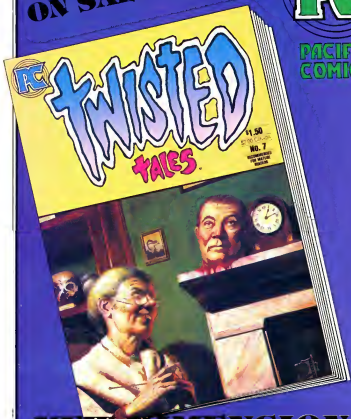
**ART BY SCOTT HAMPTON  
KEN STEACY CO-FEATURE**

**PACIFIC. TOMORROW IS HERE.**

**ON SALE SOON!**



**PACIFIC  
COMICS**



**NEW DIMENSIONS  
in T E R R O R!**

Written & Edited by **BRUCE JONES**

GO ON! JUST TRY  
TO RELAX AND  
BE YOURSELF!

HEY, BEAUTIFUL! LET ME SHOW  
YOU A DIGITAL COMIC BOOK  
THAT WAS POSTED BY JOJO!

